

Senate criticizes U.S. anti-spy efforts

From Associated Press reports

WASHINGTON — The government has ignored its own warnings to improve defenses against spies, the Senate Intelligence Committee says in a report that comes as embassy security undergoes new scrutiny in the Felix S. Bloch espionage case.

In unusually harsh language, the committee said "bureaucratic infighting" has paralyzed the new Security Evaluation Office, established last year under CIA Director William Webster to bolster anti-spy efforts at U.S. embassies around the world.

"It has failed to achieve its objectives," the panel said in an assessment written before last week's public revelation that Bloch, once the No. 2 official at the U.S. Embassy in Vienna, was under investigation for allegedly passing secrets to the So-

viet Union. Ranking committee members had been informed of the Bloch case, absent his name, in late June.

While the report deals mainly with technological efforts to thwart spying at U.S. posts abroad, it highlights the State Department's longstanding reputation among intelligence professionals for giving short shrift to security. The panel noted, for example, that the State Department has failed to create a top-level office for a director of diplomatic security, despite the administration's own recommendation for such a position following a series of studies ending in 1987.

But several former diplomats and counterintelligence officials said in interviews that the department has tried to improve anti-spy efforts.

James Nolan, the recently retired

head of the department's Office of Foreign Missions and longtime deputy FBI counterintelligence chief, said several FBI experts have been hired by the department.

And George A. Carver, Jr., who was deputy for national intelligence for two CIA directors, said "one of the toughest things to do is have counterintelligence in an open society. I'm not suggesting we become a police state, but I think we do need to review our policies." Carver supports lie detector tests for foreign service officers, like those given regularly to intelligence officers.

Since the "year of the spy" in 1985, when 12 Americans were arrested for spying, espionage cases have "not abated, either in terms of their number or their seriousness," the Senate committee said.

In a bill authorizing intelligence activities for the two years beginning Oct. 1, the panel has mandated that the FBI be given primary responsibility for investigating spying by anyone associated with the U.S. government.

The move follows criticism of the Naval Investigative Service's initial investigation of reports that Marine security guards at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow let Soviet agents roam the building after hours.

But the document's recommendations also can be read as applicable to initial moves in the Bloch case, where the first interviews with him were conducted by State Department security officers.

Bloch was suspended with pay and his State Department clearance lifted on June 22, but government sources

said he had been tipped earlier by the Soviet KGB spy agency that he was under surveillance.

Soviet government spokesman Gennady Gerasimov, asked at a news briefing in Moscow today whether Bloch was ever connected to the KGB or other East bloc intelligence agency, said "that is pure speculation." Told by reporters that he could end the speculation, he said "the speculation has not been confirmed."

Congressional intelligence officials, who declined to be identified by name, said Tuesday it is odd that the government has not yet been able to pull together enough information to arrest the diplomat. Ranking members of the congressional intelligence committees typically are briefed about such cases only when an arrest is likely within hours or days. In the Bloch case, such briefings took place roughly a month ago.

The Senate committee last week cut the Bush administration's request for the Security Evaluation Office from \$9 million to \$4.5 million "because of lack of cooperation demonstrated by both State Department and the intelligence community." The money will be restored if the organizations can learn to work together, it said.

The office was intended to assemble intelligence experts to evaluate security "threats, vulnerabilities and countermeasures," the committee said. But the State Department has failed to consult the office on embassy security, and intelligence officials have been unwilling to recognize legitimate department concerns, the report said.

The panel reserved its strongest language for a warning against trying to salvage the partially completed new U.S. Embassy building in Moscow, which is riddled with KGB listening devices the CIA still does not completely understand.

President Reagan concluded the structure should be demolished, but the Bush administration is reconsidering. "Reversing that decision would invite another security disaster and confirm signs that the executive branch is incapable of effective action in this field," the committee said.

Book reveals costly Dukakis error

From Associated Press reports

WASHINGTON — Michael Dukakis walked off the stage after his final debate with George Bush and told a top aide, "I blew it," according to a new book about the presidential race.

Dukakis knew he had committed a serious error by responding without emotion to a question about the possibility of his wife being raped and killed, political columnists Jack Germond and Jules Witcover write

in "Whose Broad Stripes and Bright Stars? The Trivial Pursuit of the Presidency 1988."

Aides were baffled at Dukakis' fumbled answer because the Massachusetts governor had rehearsed an effective answer to a soft-on-crime question 13 times during debate preparations.

Advance copies of the book, published by Warner Books, drew notice earlier this month for critical comments about Vice President Dan

Quayle attributed to Quayle's campaign aides.

President Bush said he was offended by Republican advisors, quoted by Germond and Witcover, who called Quayle a "lightweight" and described him as having a childlike immaturity.

Dukakis' debate response, widely criticized at the time, was to a question by moderator Bernard Shaw of CNN, who asked if he would favor the death penalty if his wife were

raped and murdered.

Germond and Witcover write that the three other journalists on the panel were told of Shaw's question in advance and tried unsuccessfully to talk him into softening it.

Dukakis' response began: "No, I don't, Bernard. And I think you know I've opposed the death penalty all of my life. I don't see any evidence that it's a deterrent, and I think there are better and more effective ways to deal with violent crime. We've done so in my own state."

Dukakis' answer was flat and bloodless, and it was remembered by voters because it "captured the candidate's most glaring vulnerabilities," according to the book.

The authors say Dukakis walked off the stage in Los Angeles and told top aide John Sasso, "I blew it."

The book also describes the Bush campaign's successful focus on a handful of issues used to create negative feelings about Dukakis.

Those issues included Dukakis' veto of a bill requiring students to say the pledge of allegiance, his support for a law allowing convicted murderers to be furloughed from prison and opposition to the death penalty.

Investigation of DC-10 planes not necessary after Iowa crash

From Associated Press reports

WASHINGTON — Transportation Secretary Samuel Skinner says DC-10 airliners are safe, and that there's no need for federal intervention as a result of last week's crash in Sioux City, Iowa.

Skinner said Tuesday that he based his decision on the record of the more than 400 triple-jet DC-10s in service. Its manufacturer, Douglas Aircraft, says DC-10s have flown 745 million passengers 7 billion miles over two decades.

However, DC-10s have been in some of history's worst air disasters, including a 1979 Chicago crash that killed 275 people. That crash was blamed on a faulty maintenance procedure by American Airlines.

Nothing in the plane's record indicates it's either inherently unsafe or that "anything needs to be done that hasn't been done," Skinner said.

If evidence is uncovered during the National Transportation Safety Board's investigation of the July 19 Iowa crash that killed 111 people that

indicates a problem, action will be taken, Skinner said.

Investigators are focusing on evidence that the tail engine of the United Airlines DC-10 blew up, disabling its hydraulic steering system. But they are still trying to determine what caused the explosive engine failure.

The Federal Aviation Administration has the power to ground an airplane, as it did with the DC-10 after the 1979 crash.

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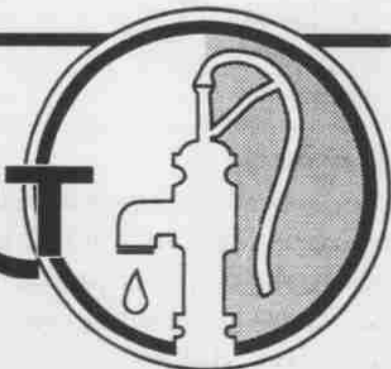
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